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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAN AND DRL
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KWMN](#) [AORC](#) [EAID](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: CANADA'S DEMOCRACY PROMOTION COMMUNITY ACTIVE
AROUND THE WORLD

REF: OTTAWA 281

¶1. (SBU) Summary and comment. Several government-funded Canadian organizations are active around the world in promoting human rights and good governance, whose work the government's proposed creation of a new Canadian democracy promotion agency focused on political party development would complement. Canadian-funded projects include constitutional development efforts in Iraq, women's rights in Afghanistan, human rights defenders in Zimbabwe, the "Panties for Peace" campaign for Burma, and judicial reform in Russia and China. The Canadian Democracy Council serves as a coordinating body for the country's democracy promotion organizations. The range of institutions in Canada and programs around the world devoted to these goals is a welcome reminder of the extent of U.S.-Canada global partnership on human rights-related issues. End summary and comment.

¶2. (SBU) In addition to the government's proposed establishment of a new Canadian democracy promotion agency focused on political party strengthening (reftel) as well as ongoing human rights projects by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), other Canadian organizations have long been involved in other areas of democratic development and human rights, most with at least some funding from the Canadian government. In 2005, the government established the Canadian Democracy Council to bring together Canada's democracy promotion community. Co-chaired by DFAIT and CIDA, the Democracy Council includes Elections Canada, Rights & Democracy, the International Development Research Center (IDRC), the Forum of Federations, the National Judicial Institute, and the Parliamentary Center. The Parliamentary Center also serves as the secretariat to both the Global Organization for Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA), networks devoted to fighting corruption and building parliamentary

cooperation in the Americas. While not as well known as American counterparts, these organizations are also active in encouraging democratic development and respect for human rights around the world.

Rights & Democracy

¶3. (U) The Canadian Parliament established the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development -- better known as "Rights & Democracy" -- in 1988 as a non-partisan, independent institution to promote democratic development and human rights. In 2008, the government provided Rights & Democracy with funding of approximately C\$10 million (US\$9.3 million). Based in Montreal, Rights & Democracy has project offices in Kabul and Port-au-Prince (both staffed entirely by local employees), and a European office in Geneva to monitor the UN Human Rights Council and for liaison with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In Afghanistan, Rights & Democracy has increased women's participation in public life through legal aid services, women's rights training, and family law reform. Rights & Democracy's Port-au-Prince office has trained hundreds of civil society activists around Haiti and helped establish Haiti's Office for the Protection of Human Rights.

¶4. (U) Rights & Democracy claims to be among the first organizations to support the Burmese government-in-exile. In May 2008, Rights & Democracy's Student Network together with

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the Quebec Women's Federation launched the Canadian "Panties for Peace" campaign to draw attention to human rights abuses and violence against women in Burma. (Note: This campaign was first established by the Lanna Action for Burma in October 2007, following the crackdown on the Buddhist monks-led pro-democracy uprising. End note.) The campaign plays on the military junta's fears that touching women's underpants rob men of their strength. Rights & Democracy's Student Network comprises 25 Canadian universities, linked to institutions in Morocco, Burma, Colombia, Jordan, and Burkina Faso.

¶5. (U) In Zimbabwe, Rights & Democracy has supported investigations to document ongoing human rights violations and case submissions to the African Commission for Human and People's Rights. Working closely with the South Africa-based Zimbabwean Exiles Forum (ZEF), Rights & Democracy has also supported advocacy efforts with the South African government to end human rights abuses against exiled Zimbabweans. In December 2008, Rights & Democracy awarded its annual John Humphrey Freedom Award to the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) for commitment to seeking justice for victims of human rights abuse. Following the award, the ZLHR conducted public outreach activities around Canada.

¶6. (U) Rights & Democracy has also worked to advance indigenous people's rights and political participation in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru, especially targeting "double discrimination" against indigenous women. It has supported election monitoring efforts in East Timor, Eritrea, and Togo, as well as security sector reform in Indonesia. It has supported development of the South Sudan Human Rights Commission, and has worked with women's rights organizations to fight sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda. Its human rights impact assessments includes a study of how Nortel's supply of a digital wireless communications network to China's Ministry of Railways for the Gormo-Lhasa railway may have had the negative effect of improving the Chinese government's regional surveillance capabilities in Tibet. Rights & Democracy has also conducted civil society strengthening programs in Burundi, Ivory Coast, El Salvador, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria,

Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Tanzania, and Thailand.

International Development Research Center (IDRC)

17. (U) Founded by the Canadian Parliament in 1970, the Ottawa-based International Development Research Center (IDRC) serves as a "knowledge bridge" by collaborating with researchers from the developing world to promote healthier, more equitable, and prosperous societies. In 2007-08, the Canadian government provided funding of almost C\$150 million (US\$140.7 million). The IDRC has regional offices in Cairo, Dakar, Montevideo, Nairobi, New Delhi, and Singapore. It has funded thousands of research projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America/Caribbean on human rights, gender equity, health, economic development, and the environment.

18. (U) IDRC links regional networks of researchers with Canadian experts to tackle "cutting edge" development issues. In Afghanistan IDRC has supported the development of a Hindu-Kush-Himalayan University Consortium, including university partners in India and China, to share best practices on the environment and economic development. IDRC also supported peace conferences in Srinagar to build relations among women divided by the Jammu-Kashmir line of

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control. IDRC partnered with Microsoft and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation to support information technology and communication development in the Middle East and North Africa through social investment in grassroots "telecenters." IDRC has also supported research on Indonesian female migrant labor flows to the UAE as well as the workers' legal rights. In cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank, IDRC supported the development of e-government systems in several Latin American states. IDRC has funded collaborative research between Ontario's York University and Sudanese universities on sustainable development in Southern Sudan. IDRC also supported the Egyptian government's efforts at encouraging the growth in small and medium-sized enterprises by improving their regulatory and tax environment.

Forum of Federations

19. (U) The Forum of Federations (Forum) is an independent Ottawa-based organization focused on federalism's contributions to the maintenance of democratic societies and governments. In 2007-08, the government gave the Forum C\$4.4 million (US\$4.1 million) in core funding. The Forum helps countries with federal systems to learn from similar systems and practices elsewhere, thereby contributing to improved governance. Partner governments contribute financially to the Forum and are represented on the Forum's Board of Directors and Strategic Council. The Forum's current partner national governments include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, and Switzerland.

110. (U) The Forum worked with the U.S.' National Democratic Institute and the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) from 2004 until this year to provide constitutional advice and training on federal governance to Iraqi officials, parliamentarians, academics, and media. With CIDA funding, the Forum organized a conference in Erbil formally to launch the Iraqi Center for Federal Studies (ICFS), which will provide federalism training to the Iraqi Government, Kurdistan Regional Government, and academics. With funding from DFAIT, Forum staff contributed to the implementation of federalism-related aspects of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement, working with the central government and Government of South Sudan. Forum staff are also collaborating with Ethiopian academics to create a new Institute of Federalism at Addis Ababa University. The Forum has also organized a range of governance workshops including on Mexican

intergovernmental cooperation, fiscal federalism in Argentina and Brazil, decentralized health care delivery in India, and Qand Brazil, decentralized health care delivery in India, and federalist education in Sri Lanka.

National Judicial Institute (NJI)

¶11. (U) The NJI is an Ottawa-based independent non-profit institution established in 1988 to provide judicial education and better justice. NJI's International Cooperation Group promotes cooperation among Canadian and international judges and judicial educators. NJI manages international judicial reform projects, hosts international study visits, and promotes the development of an international judicial network. Through a five-year CIDA-funded legal reform project, NJI set up over a dozen model courts in the Philippines as blueprints for testing alternative dispute resolution. Another five-year CIDA-funded project fostered exchanges between higher courts in China and Canada to promote systemic legal reform. NJI has also implemented

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judicial education projects in Ghana, Russia, Ukraine, Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Slovakia, Pakistan, and Chile. NJI is currently exploring ways to help Mexico as it changes to an adversarial trial system.

Parliamentary Center

¶12. (U) Founded in 1968, the Ottawa-based Parliamentary Center is a non-partisan organization devoted to improving the effectiveness of representative assemblies around the world. The Center is a global leader in parliamentary development and good governance. The Center is working to build the capacity of national legislatures in Cambodia and China to improve their citizen engagement and legislative drafting skills. It is also implementing a four-year C\$5 million CIDA-funded project to increase the capacity of Haiti's legislature and to train Haitian parliamentarians on key committees such as budget, justice, health, and poverty reduction. In 2001, the Center launched a program to strengthen parliamentary oversight in Russia. It has provided staff training for the Russian Federal Assembly and hosted exchange visits for Russian legislators to learn about Canadian policy on federalist and aboriginal issues in the northern regions. The Center has also supported parliamentary strengthening efforts in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Serbia and Bosnia. In the Middle East, the Center has implemented a CIDA-funded project to strengthen relations between the Lebanese Parliament and Lebanese NGOs.

Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)

¶13. (U) GOPAC is an international network of parliamentarians dedicated to good governance and combating corruption. Although the GOPAC secretariat is located in Ottawa's Parliamentary Center, it is an independent financial entity. Founded in 2002, GOPAC has hundreds of members around the world organized into regional and national chapters. GOPAC has developed a code of conduct for parliamentarians and a handbook on preventing corruption. GOPAC provides peer support for its members, educational resources on legislative oversight, and tools for measuring accountability and results in countering corruption. GOPAC's third global conference took place in Kuwait in November 2008 in partnership with GOPAC's Arab Regional Chapter. In February 2009, parliamentarians in Azerbaijan and Georgia formed the South Caucasus Parliamentarian's Network Against Corruption. CIDA, USAID, the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the World Bank, and the private sector provide funding for GOPAC.

Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA)
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¶14. (U) The Parliamentary Center, CIDA, and DFAIT provide funding for FIPA, an independent network made up of the national legislatures of the OAS member states. The FIPA secretariat is located within Ottawa's Parliamentary Center. FIPA was formed at the 2001 inaugural meeting hosted by Parliament in Ottawa. FIPA members are committed to promoting parliamentary participation and dialogue in the inter-American system. FIPA encourages the sharing of best practices amongst its members and holds annual plenary meetings to discuss hemispheric issues.

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